

Introduction of Dr. David Lee Garrison by Dr. Ksenia Bonch-Reeves

Good evening,

It is my pleasure to introduce Dr. David Lee Garrison, Professor Emeritus of Spanish and former Chair of the Department of Modern Languages. David received his Bachelor's degree with Honors in Romance Languages from Wesleyan University. He earned two masters' degrees, one in Spanish and another in Comparative Literature, and he received his Ph.D. in Spanish from Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Garrison joined our faculty in 1979, served as Chair of the Department of Modern Languages from 1999 to 2007 and retired as a Professor Emeritus of Spanish in 2009. David was the recipient of many awards, including the Presidential Award for Outstanding Faculty Member, the Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching, and the Presidential Award for Special Contributions, for composing the lyrics to the University's Alma Mater that many of you will be singing at the commencement ceremony.

During his long and fruitful career, David wrote, edited and translated ten books of poetry, including *O Taste and See*, an anthology of food poems that was the winner of the American Poetry Anthology Award for 2004. He also translated and wrote on Spanish poets of the Golden Age and those of the Generation of 1927, including Luis de Góngora, José Bergamín, and Pedro Salinas.

I think it won't be an exaggeration to say that all of us who worked and studied with David Garrison consider ourselves to be very fortunate. You do not often have a department chair who is also an accomplished poet and translator of poetry. Every text David pens or edits – and during his tenure as Department Chair it could be texts as simple as letters of recommendation, the departmental newsletter and even e-mails to faculty - is an example of stylistic sensitivity, linguistic elegance, and devotion to language. When David writes, every word shines; it is to be savored and enjoyed and marveled at, a reminder of the great gift of language that we all share as human beings.

Apart from poetic translations, I admire David as a talented translator of knowledge. David's class on the Spanish sonnet was among the best I have ever attended, and it was his elegant and clear explanation that made me truly understand and appreciate *el soneto*, that late adaptation of an elegant Italian poetic form to the resonant language of Spanish warriors and conquistadors. Of course it was a special treat that David would also read his own translations of Spanish sonnets to the class. David's gift of making difficult things seem clear and simple is one that always inspires me as I continue to work on my own teaching.

I have also been fortunate to have David as a neighbor. David is infinitely interested in people, and he always takes time to listen and find out what's going on in your life. Not surprisingly, among David's many gifts is that of attracting people, and it's the one that we see in action here today with all of you in the audience. As the Spanish poet Jorge Manrique said, "sus grandes hechos y claros/ no cumple que los alabe" ("Not here behooves to chant his praises/ Or laud his

valor”) —not any longer, for we are in for a real treat. I am truly honored to introduce Dr. David Garrison, who will be speaking on the Art of Translation.